

Doyle, Dan

From: Fireside Brick Oven Creations [firesideboc@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 28, 2012 8:19 AM
To: Doyle, Dan
Subject: Bill to Increase Minimum Wage Seeks to Eliminate the Tip Credit

Good Morning Dan,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me on the phone yesterday. Just to remind you, my name is Stephanie Nicholson and last year I opened a small restaurant in Gales Ferry. While I am able to pay my bills thus far, business has slowed tremendously in the last few months and I am seriously worried about the future of my restaurant. I feel increasing the minimum wage and eliminating the tip credit could put me out of business.

I have been in the service industry all of my life, waitressing since I was 16, bartending since I was 18. I can tell you that I honestly never depended on my hourly paycheck to pay my bills. Tips are what service people live off of. On any given day I would average \$20-\$30 per hour for my tips, sometimes more. I always considered myself fortunate to make that kind of money. I didn't have to work a 9-5, 40 hour per week job to have a comfortable lifestyle. Most servers/bartenders that I know still average around \$1000.00 per week in tips working about 30 hours per week. That's a lot of money for a job that doesn't require a college degree. Eventhough I am a small restaurant, I only seat 48 people, my servers here average about \$15-\$20 per hour in tips. On a slow day, maybe \$10.

To raise the minimum wage and eliminate the tip credit would basically double my payroll for servers. That is something I could not afford. I would have to seriously cut back on employees which would make my business suffer when it is busy because I could not afford to adequately staff the restaurant. I feel that most small restaurants would be in the same position. With the unemployment rate being what it is, can the economy get any better with more people losing jobs because small businesses such as myself can't afford to pay them?

Thank you again for your time regarding this matter.
Stephanie Nicholson
Owner Fireside Brick Oven Creation

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